

**Standard 8-6:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of South Carolina's development during the early twentieth century.

**8-6.5** Explain the effects of the Great Depression and the lasting impact of New Deal programs on South Carolina, including the Rural Electrification Act, the Civilian Conservation Corps, Works Progress Administration and Public Works Administration building projects, the Social Security Act, and the Santee Cooper electricity project. (H, E, G, P)

**Taxonomy Level:** B 2 Understand / Conceptual Knowledge

**Previous/future knowledge:**

In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, students explained the effects of the Great Depression and the New Deal on daily life in South Carolina, including the widespread poverty and unemployment and the role of the Civilian Conservation Corps (3-5.5).

In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, students summarized the stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression, including economic weakness, unemployment, failed banks and businesses, and migration from rural areas (5-4.1). They also explained the immediate and lasting effect on American workers caused by innovations of the New Deal, including the Social Security Act, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and the Civilian Conservation Corps (5-4.2).

In United States history, students will explain the causes and effects of the stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression, including the disparity in incomes, limited government regulation, stock market

speculation, and the collapse of the farm economy; wealth distribution, investment, and taxes; government policies and the Federal Reserve System; and the effects of the Depression on human beings and the environment (USHC-7.4). Students will also compare the first and second New Deals as responses to the economic bust of the Great Depression, including the rights of women and minorities in the workplace and the successes, controversies, and failures of recovery and reform measures such as the labor movement (USHC-7.5).

**It is essential for students to know**

It is important that students understand that the Great Depression was not caused by the stock market crash. Although the crash marked the recognized beginning of the Great Depression nationally, South Carolina had been in depression many years before the crash. After the stock market crash, conditions continued to deteriorate in South Carolina. More banks failed and some textile mills closed their doors. Farmers lost their land to foreclosure and a railroad went bankrupt. A quarter of the people in South Carolina were unemployed and people had no money to spend in their local stores. Marriage and birth rates dropped dramatically as people postponed starting families because they could not afford them. Young men wandered from town to town or rode the rails searching for work or a handout. Charitable organizations, such as churches and community groups, could not keep up with the need for food, clothing and shelter. People looked to their government for help.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected President of the United States in November 1932 on the promise that he would bring a New Deal to the American people. By the time he was inaugurated in March of 1933 conditions were even worse. Roosevelt told the people that they had "nothing to fear but fear itself." He used the radio to talk to the people in fireside chats. Most importantly he started an aggressive program to bring relief, recovery and reform in his first 'Hundred Days' in office.

New Deal programs were not specifically designed for South Carolina. However certain programs had a significant and long-term impact on the people of South Carolina.

The **Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)** put unemployed young men to work in the nations' parks. They lived in army camps and sent most of their pay home to help their struggling families and pump money into the economy. Over 50,000 South Carolinians were employed in reforestation and soil conservation projects and in building state parks at Hunting Island, Paris Mountain, Poinsett and Myrtle Beach State Park. However the CCC reflected the prejudices of the times and was racially segregated.

The **Public Works Administration (PWA)** and the **Works Progress Administration (WPA)** engaged in building projects that not only put people to work but also provided lasting improvements for the community. The PWA built schools, libraries and courthouses as well as U.S. Navy aircraft carriers. The WPA built highways, airports, bridges and playgrounds as well as hospitals and schools. Artists and writers were also employed by the WPA. They produced murals and plays and recorded interviews with former slaves that preserved the historical record of South Carolina African Americans. African Americans did not receive their fair share of New Deal assistance and continued to be discriminated against in hiring by these programs. Job creation programs put some people to work, alleviated their despair and economic hardship and pumped some money into the economy. However, the New Deal did not result in economic recovery.

The **Social Security Act** was designed as a reform of the system that would prevent future depressions and provide protection for the elderly, the orphaned, the disabled and the unemployed. The system of old age pensions was particularly important to South Carolina because it was one of only a few states that did not offer such an insurance program. The cost was shared by workers and their employers. Social Security was also the basic social welfare legislation in the United States and set the precedent for future aid to people in need. Because of this, Social Security has come under criticism. However, the poverty rate for the elderly declined significantly as a result of Social Security and the Social Security System has had a profound impact on Americans of all ages.

The **Santee Cooper electricity project** was the largest New Deal project in South Carolina. The project built dams on the Santee and the Cooper Rivers, creating Lake Marion and Lake Moultrie. These hydroelectric dams produced power that would light the region, provided jobs to those who built it and to others in industries made possible by the power the project provided, and improved living conditions for many South Carolinians.

The **Rural Electrification Act** brought power to many of the farms and rural regions of South Carolina. By creating power cooperatives citizens were able to get government loans and work together to provide electricity to less populated areas where commercial power companies were unwilling to string power lines. By 1940, 25% of farms had electricity. Some farmers were able to install milking machines and water pumps that made farming more profitable.

Although the New Deal had a lasting impact on the United States and on South Carolina, it did not end the Great Depression. The depression ended when the United States became involved in helping the Allies fight Hitler's Germany in World War II.

#### **It is not essential for students to know**

Although students do not need to remember how the stock market crashed or why the Great Depression occurred, it would be helpful for teachers to read through the Support Document for USHC 7.4 and provide students with a transition from 8-6.4 to 8-6.5. Students do not need to remember the ups and downs of the business cycle, although it would aid their understanding of the Depression.

Students do not need to understand the efforts of President Herbert Hoover to address the problems of the Depression. They do not need to know about the campaign of 1932, the bank holiday or all of the specific legislation that was passed during the First 100 Days. Although students are not required to

know about the role of the Agricultural Adjustment Act in meeting the needs of farmers, since so many South Carolinians were affected by this act, it should be discussed. The AAA adversely impacted sharecroppers and tenant farmers by paying landowners to keep their land out of production, limiting overproduction but driving sharecroppers and tenant farmers off the land. The AAA was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. However, it was replaced by a system of payments for limiting production that were important to South Carolina farmers throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Students do not need to know about the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) however it would be helpful to draw the comparison of the TVA with the Santee Cooper River Project. There are many other New Deal agencies that students do not need to remember. However it would be helpful for students to be made aware of the long list of agencies so that they appreciate the scope of the New Deal. Students do not need to memorize these alphabet agencies. Students do not need to know about the strikes at textile mills in the 1930s that resulted in the deaths of workers in Honea Path. Although this strike broke unions in South Carolina, it contributed to the passage of New Deal legislation that addressed the needs of workers. Students do not need to know about the legislation of the Second New Deal that provided minimum wage, maximum hours and child labor laws and allowed workers to organize into unions and bargain collectively with management.

**Assessment guidelines:**

Appropriate assessments would require students to **explain** the effects of the Great Depression. Students should also be able to **explain** the impact of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Works Progress Administration and Public Works Administration building projects, the Social Security Act, and the Santee Cooper electricity project and the Rural Electrification Act on South Carolina. Students should be able to **identify examples** of what each of these agencies was designed to do to improve conditions during the Great Depression.